

## Introduction

The goal for landscape reconstruction and preservation at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site is to achieve and maintain a composite historic scene representing the post-presidential period 1953 to 1972 (See "Historic Period," Part I, Administrative Data Section).

Because of the Truman family's appreciation of American history and historic preservation, it bequeathed the property at 219 North Delaware Street to the Federal Government for the enjoyment and inspiration of future generations. Fortunately, the National Park Service inherited a property which had experienced only slight changes which occurred over the course of several decades. The historic context of the Truman home's landscape has not been appreciably altered. Generally, most trees and shrubs that existed during the Truman Presidency (1945-1953) are extant today. So, too, are the walkways, driveway, flower garden, and remnants of structural garden elements still in place as the Trumans knew them.

The task which remains for park managers is to achieve and maintain a scene which reflects the years 1953 to 1972, a period when both Harry and Bess Truman lived in the residence and were in charge of caring for their home's landscape. The historic landscape and home should be viewed as part of an inseparable whole. The home's exterior, enveloped by a highly-structured landscape, is an outward reflection of the former inhabitants' lifestyle. It serves as an integral part of the national historic site's interpretation.

The screened back porch is one of the most important interpretive areas of the Truman home because, as a gathering point for visitors, it affords the opportunity for interpretation of the home's landscape, larger family compound, and surrounding neighborhood. It also serves as a transition point between the house and the east yard. Not only was the porch a favorite family gathering spot, but after its enlargement and screening in the spring of 1950, the porch was a haven of privacy for the Trumans. There they enjoyed their yard and the fresh air without the constant fear of prying eyes or drawing a crowd of onlookers at the steel picket fence. What visitors see from this significant vantage point should accurately reflect the historic period and scene (1953-1972) as the Trumans once knew it.

The historic landscape scene to be conveyed will be the look of a yard that was maintained in an informal and uncontained style. The vegetation will be allowed a specific range within which to

grow and develop into its own characteristic habit. Except for the hybrid rose garden, vegetation planted in groupings or in a line will be allowed to flow together for a mass appearance rather than manicured into individual specimens. Some shrub groups in the vicinity of the back porch will function as screening elements to enhance privacy, that luxury which the Trumans sought to protect within the confines of their property. Shrubbery that has "drifted" or "creeped" out of location or is past a point of good health (as shown on sheet 2) should be replaced and/or relocated in the apparent original location. Trees will be allowed to develop naturally through their full cycle of growth with intervention only for storm damage repair, disease control, resource protection, and visitor safety. Turf will be viewed as part of a unifying ground cover. Turf was not historically maintained as a pure strain of grass and will be acceptable with a minority of weed invaders.

### RESTORATION METHODOLOGY

The process of restoring the landscape will be accomplished by two methods:

1. Replacement of selected deteriorated specimens, areas, or features (addressed here in Part IV), and
2. Applying appropriate maintenance practices to rejuvenate, restore, and perpetuate the landscape (addressed in Maintenance Guide, Part V).

All restoration activities will be undertaken with sensitivity to the possibility that other cultural resources may be present below grade. Any ground disturbance carried out pursuant to restoration of the historic scene will be consistent with National Park Service review and compliance procedures which are predicated on Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Any deviation from the recommendations found herein will require additional clearance to proceed through the established review process.

### RESTORATION OF VEGETATION

To determine what should be replaced and why, three general categories are identified as follows:

#### Category 1 [C1]

1. Plants that are historic, but which are in such poor condition that they constitute a significant safety hazard.

Most of the plantings at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site have a direct, historic association and merit preservation. Reasonable efforts should be undertaken to preserve as much of this historic, natural fabric as possible. Maintenance and/or safety concerns may be used to justify the removal of plantings (i.e., trees) and/or nonreplacement of historic landscape features. In all other cases, however, historic plantings should normally be replaced in kind.

### Category 2 [C2]

#### 2. Plants that are historic, but which have changed since the historic period (1953-1972) that the historic context of the landscape has been compromised so that rejuvenation is not practical.

Many of the home's plantings have lived beyond their normal life expectancy or have become "woody" and overgrown. Other plants have deteriorated to the point where the original plants have long since disappeared and in their place several generations of suckering stems have developed. Although many plants reproduce through suckering, left uncontrolled over a period of time, suckering can change the original locations of plants as well as the original look or form of the plant. When replacing plants, caution should be taken to lessen the impact on the historic scene by instituting a gradual program of planting replacement. Whenever possible, shrubs should be rejuvenated instead of replaced.

### Category 3 [C3]

#### 3. All nonhistoric plants.

This category includes all volunteer plants, those which have established and propagated themselves since 1972 and which do not conform to the landscape's intended historic design. There are no known plantings, other than hybrid tea roses, which were intentionally introduced after 1972. All nonhistoric plants (volunteers) should therefore be removed by the National Park Service.

### REPLACEMENT OF SITE AMENITIES

Treatment and/or replacement of landscape components and site amenities should follow the same criteria as listed above. Reconstruction should only be allowed for features which currently exist in some form and should be based on firm historical evidence. Completion of the landscape component should also be based on its significance relative to the overall design of the historic scene. Should there be little or no historical documentation, the

landscape component should not be replaced. Limitations on these provisions would be that the component not constitute an unacceptable safety hazard or that it not place an unreasonable burden on park maintenance.

Replacement and/or reconstruction of specific historic landscape site amenities by the National Park Service is a desirable goal. Such activity will serve to correct the presently incomplete historic landscape. Only elements which have been damaged or have components missing should be replaced. This includes the sundial (HS-07) and pergola (HS-04). The birdbath (HS-05) has deteriorated and should be replaced in kind.

Another consideration for park management is current versus historic usage. Designed as a one-family residential property, the historic scene of the Truman home must now accommodate a steady stream of visitors. Because the poor condition of the historic concrete walkways constituted an unacceptable safety hazard, the walkways in the front and south side yards were replaced in kind in the spring of 1984. The park does an admirable job in controlling access to the grounds for landscape maintenance purposes and visitors are restricted to the walkways in order to minimize the impact on the historic, natural fabric. Regrading around these walkways to reduce tripping hazards further for visitors is an acceptable action. All future activities which might involve current versus historic usage problems should evaluate proposed changes utilizing the above methodology. Ideally, any alternative which is the least intrusive to the historic scene and period (1953-1972) should be adopted.

#### VEGETATION REPLACEMENT/RESTORATION GUIDE

NOTE: Information in parentheses indicate quadrant location and number. Information in brackets indicate the methodology rationale.

##### A. TREES

1. Existing trees to be replaced: The second and sixth (identified on drawing) sugar maples aligned from north to south in the front (west) yard should be replaced. The first tree is structurally unsound and could pose a safety hazard both on and off the Truman grounds [C-1] (SW-1). The second tree is stunted from some previous damage and should be replaced [C-2] (NW-1).

2. Non-extant historic trees: Two elms (See Appendix A, Figure 10 and 23) which bordered the west and east ends of the pergola should not be replaced. There are several reasons for this recommendation. Because the replacement of the wooden portion of the pergola is being recommended, reintroduction of the elms would

pose a safety and maintenance hazard to the pergola. Because these elements are in such close proximity to the house--particularly the screened porch where visitors gather--the aforementioned concerns are especially unacceptable hazards. The elms should not, therefore, be replaced [C1].

3. In addition, the large hickory tree (See Appendix A, Figure 18) which grew between the barn/carriage house and the Secret Service security booth (HS-06) was removed by 1970 and should not be replaced. The primary reason for this recommendation is that the hickory, growing so close to the carriage house, would constitute an unacceptable safety and maintenance problem for the structure [C1]. Reestablishing the dense shrubbery along the north side of the carriage house will complete the historic setting.

4. Other considerations: Because of the virulent nature of Dutch elm disease, large numbers of American elm trees across the United States succumbed and were removed in the mid- to late 1900s. Until the disease can be arrested, horticulturalists generally have discouraged the planting of American elms. Park management has two alternatives concerning replacement of diseased or dead elms: A). Replace the elm(s) in kind to preserve the historic scene of the Truman home; or B). Replace the elm(s) with another species common to the Truman home's landscape such as sugar maple. To be faithful to the historic scene, Alternative A is preferred over Alternative B. Should replacement in kind of a species prove to be difficult or impossible, park management should consider taking a graft(s) in order to propagate the tree (or any other planting). The remainder of the existing trees should be watched and cared for according to suggested maintenance practices.

#### B. SHRUBS:

Specific replacement of shrubs and removal of shrubs without replacement are identified on the drawing (sheet 2) and are listed below. Plant information is identified by quadrant section, quantity, name of plant, and proximity to an identifiable feature, i.e., fence, yard interior, house, etc., and any special notes.

##### AREA: northwest quadrant

- a. Plant: Remove 1 mock orange by northwest corner of front porch and leave barberry. [C3] (NW-4).
- b. Plant: Remove 1 juniper in front of library window. [C3] (NW-6).

##### AREA: northeast quadrant

- a. Plants: 4 existing mock oranges by fence and 2 remnants coming out from middle of fence toward middle of yard.

Notes: Remove existing deteriorated plants and replace with new plants in same location. [C2] (NE-1).

b. Plants: 2 existing and 3 proposed mock oranges by home's air conditioning (AC) units. [C2] (NW-2).

Notes: Replace existing plants (b) in location of AC unit ledge to keep away from AC unit and foundation of house; plant 3 new plants (a) on northwest side of AC unit to enhance screening. Replace deteriorated mock orange with new plant in same location. (See "F. Reducing/Eliminating Intrusions on the Historic Scene" in this section).

c. Plants: 4 mock oranges, 2 rose of Sharons, 1 honeysuckle (a), all existing by pergola (NE-3).

Notes: Replace mock orange and rose of Sharon plants in adjusted locations, 18 inches out from foundations of pergola [C2]. Remove and do not replace honeysuckle which most likely is a volunteer [C3].

AREA: southwest quadrant

Plants: 1 existing mock orange by home (SW-2)

Notes: Remove existing deteriorated specimen and replace with new plant in same location [C2].

AREA: southeast quadrant

Plants: 4 mock oranges and 3 rose of Sharons by the fence (SE-1)

Notes: Because of "creeping," relocate new shrubs 18 inches out (perpendicular) from fence and existing location, toward home [C2].

Plant: remove 1 juniper [C3] (SE-6).

C. PERENNIALS/BULBS

AREA: southeast quadrant

Plants: Surprise lilies by fence (SE-1)

Notes: Fill in the two gaps between the three clumps of surprise lilies to form one continuous row. Thin out existing lilies for a source of plant material.

Plants: Tulips are between southside of rear porch and walkway (SE-2).

Notes: Add bulbs that are similar as existing to bring total up to 12 plants. Set bulbs approximately 5 inches deep in good topsoil mixed with bone meal. Plant in random pattern 12 inches apart in the space east of the grapevine.

AREA: northeast quadrant

Plants: tulips by driveway (NE-3 a)

Notes: West of driveway near yellow daffodils, re-establish semicircle with similar or existing white tulips. Lift existing bulbs, redefine planting bed; rework bed with good topsoil with mixed in bone meal at least 1 foot deep; reset approximately 5 inches deep existing and additional bulbs 6 to 8 inches apart in a staggered, semicircle pattern.

East of driveway (NE-4) in lily of the valley bed, plant additional bulbs that are similar as existing tulips in area, bringing the total up to 17. Plant in a random pattern at least 18 inches apart, approximately 5 inches deep in good topsoil mixed in with bone meal.

Plants: modern roses (NE) [Note: The American Rose Society classifies any rose introduced after 1867 as a modern rose.]

Notes: The rose garden as established and maintained by the National Park Service under the Volunteer in Parks (VIP) program is not compatible with the historic (1953-1972) rose garden in composition. Historic rose varieties are unknown except that according to the 1955 "Person to Person" interview, Bess Truman spoke about her "Mrs. Lasker's Peace roses." No such official rose designation exists, but it is possible that this may have been a local variety of peace rose. Park management should restore the rose garden to its historic 4 x 3 x 4 configuration (see Historical Data Section) and care. There are two alternatives: A). Replace all present rose bushes which do not strictly conform to the known red and pink color scheme, and B). Replace all the rose bushes in the garden with modern hybrid tea roses using a fairly even mixture of red and pink roses that have a year of introduction before 1973. At least one of the roses should be a peace rose, a variety known to have existed in Bess Truman's rose garden during the early part of the historic period. Alternative B is preferred over Alternative A.

#### D. TURF/GROUNDS AREA

Listed below and identified by cross-hatching on drawing sheet 2, are observed grade and soil problems in the turf areas. These are concerns that could cause safety hazards, obstruct maintenance, and/or are historically incorrect. General maintenance and/or establishment of turf grasses including actions to address weed impacts are in the Maintenance Guide, Part V.

##### 1. northwest quadrant

Problem (NW-2 and a): abrupt grade change encourages scalping of turf when mowing; two unfilled stump holes.

Solution: Lay back and round off slope to allow a gradual change. Take out remnant of stump and fill in holes with topsoil, grade to conform with adjacent areas, establish area with turf grasses (refer to Part V).

Problem (NE-3): utility ground depression

Solution: Fill in with topsoil and grade flush with surrounding area; establish area with turf grasses (refer to Part V).

##### 2. northeast quadrant

Problem (NE-3-c): rough ground area from old stump hole.

Solution: Remove turf and any obstruction (rocks, wood, etc.) within 6 inches from the surface; rototill, add topsoil to fill in depression, fine grade to conform to adjacent areas, reestablish area with turf grasses as referred to in Part V.

### 3. Southeast quadrant

Problem (SE-3): grade drop-off from reconstructed sidewalk creates a potential safety hazard.

Solution: Fill in around outside edge of sidewalk with topsoil. The fill should be brought out from the walk fairly level for 10 to 12 inches when tamped down to meet existing grade.

Problem (SE-5): rough grade between alley and fence creating drainage problems.

Solution: regrade area to blend in with adjacent areas and to allow positive drainage. Reseed area.

## E. SITE AMENITIES RECONSTRUCTION GUIDE (positive and negative cases):

### 1. PERGOLA (HS-04)

The Wallace/Truman pergola (circa 1920 to 1970) should be reconstructed because it represents a significant historic landscape element important to the visitor's understanding of the home's back yard. The pergola (HS-04), which was removed by circa 1970, was at least the second such structure erected, the first having succumbed to a windstorm. It was probably not replaced by the Trumans after the second windstorm because of their declining health and increasingly limited contact with their home's landscape.

Sufficient photographic documentation as well as the extant brick and concrete foundation makes replicating the wooden portion of the pergola feasible. No conjecture in the reconstruction would be involved. The simple wooden staircase leading up to the screened porch should also be replaced. (For additional pergola information, see Appendix E).

### 2. BIRDBATH (HS-05)

The birdbath should be accessioned into the museum collection and placed in storage to prevent further deterioration. A duplicate should be obtained to replace HS-05 in kind. During above-freezing weather, park maintenance staff should maintain the birdbath with fresh water on a regular basis.



### 3. SUNDIAL (HS-07)

The sundial element should be identified and replaced. Presently, only the sundial pedestal stands in the northeast yard; the metallic face with the inscription, "My Face Marks the Sunny Hours. What Can You Say of Yours?" disappeared following the death of Bess Truman, but before National Park Service acquisition. It is readily apparent to visitors viewing the yard from the screened porch that the sundial face is missing. Because the sundial element was present throughout the historic period (1953-1972), its replacement would complete the sundial as an important component of the historic scene.

Park cultural resource managers should contact Mrs. May Wallace and Mrs. Margaret Truman Daniel in an effort to identify the historic configuration of the sundial element. (See Appendix E for information on sundials).

### 4. SECRET SERVICE SECURITY BOOTH (HS-06)

Constructed in late 1945, the security booth served as the headquarters for Secret Service agents during the Truman Presidency. Information on this structure is scant and would not permit its reconstruction without a minimum of conjecture under National Park Service policy. Although the Trumans reluctantly accepted the structure, they considered the booth an intrusion on their property since the day it was built. In 1955, Bess Truman admitted to a journalist her dislike of the building and expressed the hope of finding someone willing to take the building away. In 1962, the Truman's painter and carpenter did finally haul the structure away. When Secret Service protection resumed in December 1965, Bess Truman vetoed the suggestion that the guardhouse be rebuilt. Margaret Truman recalled, "They were told, 'No!' Not under any circumstances. They were told by my mother that she would not have that in the back yard, and that was it."

Because the Trumans considered the Secret Service security booth (HS-06) an intrusion on their property, paid to have it removed in 1962, and denied permission for its reconstruction in 1965, the National Park Service should likewise not reconstruct it, but should continue to maintain HS-06 as an archeological site. Future investigation in this area is likely to produce significant information for researchers concerning the historic configuration of this structure.

## F. REDUCING/ELIMINATING INTRUSIONS ON THE HISTORIC SCENE:

### 1. The 1976 Bicentennial marker

Installed in 1976, the placard conflicts with the established historic period and scene (1953-1972). Listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a noncontributing, and therefore historically insignificant, element intruding on the historic scene, the marker is not considered by the National Park Service to be a historic structure. Although Bess Truman sanctioned its installation at a time when all the city's historic buildings were being so recognized as part of the nation's Bicentennial of the American Revolution celebration, one must remember that Harry and Bess Truman resisted any such markers or commemoration of the Truman Presidency during their life together. Indeed, the National Historic Landmark designation was resisted until only shortly before Harry Truman's death. Even at that time, however, the Trumans requested that there be no signs or ceremonies. It is this strong sense of humility which has engendered such deep public admiration towards Harry and Bess Truman.

Park management should therefore consider the removal of the marker by first consulting with the city and its Heritage Preservation Commission. The placard should then either be returned to the city or be accessioned into the park's collection and placed in storage. If this proves unfeasible, the placard should remain until sometime in the future when it can be removed. However, the Bicentennial sign should not be replaced in the future with another placard.

## 2. Modern Air Conditioning Units

These air conditioning units were installed by the National Park Service along the north side of the kitchen wing and are presently a visual intrusion on the historic scene. Deciduous vegetative screening in this area is not adequate, particularly in winter, to conceal the units from visitors who view the home from Truman Road. The air-conditioning system should be relocated to an unobtrusive area such as the barn/carriage house or to one of the Wallace homes which are proposed for acquisition in the General Management Plan. Another alternative would be to leave the system in place, but to place it as far below grade as possible in order to reduce the visual impact.

If none of these alternatives is feasible or if an interim measure is desired, park management should consider planting a shrub (M.O. 2a) or shrubs in this area to shield the air-conditioning system from view. A predominant variety which would complement the historic scene is mock orange.